

Lavington 19/1/76
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S E R M O N

Preached in the

Cathedral - Church

O F

E X E T E R,

O N T H E

GENERAL FAST-DAY,

February 6. 1756.

By the Lord Bishop of EXETER.

Published at the Request of the Rt. Wor-
shipful the MAYOR, and CHAMBER.


E X O N:

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To the Right Worshipful the
Mayor, and Chamber
OF THE
CITY and COUNTY of
E X O N.

GENTLEMEN,

AS you have made it your unanimous *Request* that the following *Sermon* should be *Printed*, because you are *fully satisfied* that it will be of great and general *Benefit* to the *Public*; I think it my *Duty* to submit: and for that Reason, were there no other, I ought to look upon your *Request* as improved into a *Command*.

However unequal such an *imperfect Discourse* may be to answer your *Expectations*; yet if it contribute

DEDICATION.

bute in any Measure to so good a Purpose; if it promote the Benefit of the *Community*, the *City*, or *Private* Persons, at this *Important Juncture*;-- you have an undoubted Title to a full Share of that mutual *Satisfaction* which will accrue to you, and to my self.

I have an additional Reason for this *Address*; because it affords me an Opportunity of testifying my *Respects*; and acknowledging the constant Course of *Civilities*, which I have received from you.

I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Obliged

and Obedient Servant,

G. EXON.



P S A L M xlv. 8.

*Come, behold the Works of the Lord,
what Desolations he hath made in
the Earth,*

FROM the Contents of this
F Psalm we may rationally judge,
that it was composed on the
double Account of some terrible *Earth-
quake*, and some consuming *War*. Un-
der which Calamities the Nation could
have no Security, no Hope, but from the
Divine Protection. And their Trust in
that was All-sufficient.

*God is our Refuge and Strength, a very
present Help in Trouble. Therefore will
we not fear, though the Earth be removed,
and though the Mountains be carried into
the Heart of the Sea: though the Waters
thereof roar, and the Mountains shake with*

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the Swelling thereof. For however the boisterous Element may rage, to whatever Degree of Noise and Turbulency it may rise; *there is a River,* (of a more pure and gentle Nature) *the Streams whereof shall make glad the City of God, the Holy Place of the Tabernacle of the most High.* This was literally the Case of the Old Jerusalem; where *the Waters of Siloam, which go softly* (Isai. viii. 6.) refreshed the City and Sanctuary; and flowing from the Root of Mount Sion afforded the Consolation of God's being well known there as a sure Refuge. Accordingly in the New Jerusalem, whereof the former was an Emblem, when the Mystery of God is finished, *The Angel* (saith St. John, Rev. xxii. 1.) *shewed me a pure River of the Water of Life, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.* The Psalmist goes on, *God is in the Midst of her; she shall not be moved.* Indeed the Heathen raged, and the Kingdoms were moved: Idolatrous Nations made the House of David the Object of their Fury. But God uttered his Voice, and the Earth melted.

ted. The Earthquake was sufficient to have checked the Rage of their Enemies *Armies*; and yet neither of them to be feared; for, he addeth, *The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge.*

Then summoning the People together, he bids them take a View of the Ravages which Heaven had inflicted on the World, and consider what Uses were to be made of such terrible Calamities. *Come, behold the Works of the Lord, what Desolations he hath made in the Earth.*

This may serve as a proper *Introduction* to our serious Observance of the *solemn Humiliation* of this Day; — set apart by Authority (in Conformity with God and Nature) “for imploring a Blessing on His Majesty’s Fleets and Armies, in this important Situation of Public Affairs; — as also for the Humbling of our selves before God, in a deep Sense of his late Visitation, by a most dreadful and extensive Earthquake.”

'Tis Matter of melancholy Consideration, and Proof of our Indiscretion and Injustice, that the *Common and Regular* Dispensation of Providence, in the Preservation of the World and its Inhabitants, should not suffice for keeping alive in our Minds a constant Sense of its Maker and Preserver, a due Acknowledgment of his Power and Goodness; and that some *uncommon* Event alone, Nature as it were disordered and out of Course, should draw our Eyes and Attention upwards. But so it is; the regular Influences of the Heavens, and Productions of the Earth (which ought to be regarded as a *continual Miracle*) have but too slight an Effect upon our dull and gross Apprehensions. How carelessly do we rise, and eat, and lie down? How unattentive are we to this sedate and perpetual Harmony, this continual Revolution of Blessings? As if it were *only* a thing of Course, and we were tired with the Continuance and Care of *Common Providence*. Nature must be in a Tumult, and Storm; something *extraordinary*, and uncommonly loud, must awake us, in order
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to create a reverential Awe towards the Supreme Being, and stir up our religious Sentiments and Affections.

Nay, the Blessings of Affluence and Peace do not merely steal away our Regard, but are apt fatally to *corrupt our Morals*, to infect us with Pride, Luxury, Intemperance, immoderate Love of Pleasure, Profaneness, and Contempt of God's Word and Commandments. So that nothing but some surprising Interposition of Heaven, some violent and formidable Stroke, will be of Force enough to humble and reform us. We must be *disturb'd into Devotion*; and *Confusion* alone can bring us into *Order*.

'Tis manifest, and out of Question, that something has long been wanted for fixing the Heart of Man in a serious and devout Frame, and producing a real Sense of his *religious Obligations*, a reverential Esteem of Things Sacred. And that *All-wise Being*, who best knoweth how to suit the Means to the End, and apply different

ferent Arguments to different Persons, hath lately called the World by an awakening Alarm, by a most dreadful and extensive *Earthquake*; to try what *feeling* will do, and whether Distress will not bring the *Prodigal home to his Father*.

And a *Distress* an *Earthquake* is of the most *formidable* Nature. When Heaven giveth it a License to range, it knows no Distinction: But Prince, Priest, and People; Palaces, Churches, and Cottages, are swept away with promiscuous Desolation. — It is a *clandestine Battery*, not to be foreseen, prevented, or avoided. Suddenly, and without Notice, the Earth opens its Mouth; casting forth the Dead, and swallowing up the Living. — It bereaves the Sufferers of the common Assistance of Friends and Relations; the natural Duty of Self-preservation driving them at a Distance: Or if they come to our Assistance perhaps the Wages of their Service is Death, and they are crushed in the pious Act. — Wide and diffusive is its Rage, seizing on Families, Cities, and Provinces:
And,

And, big with Implements of Destruction, it *travelleth from one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another People*: And there is no arresting it in its Progress.

As to the *natural Causes* of such Shocks and Convulsions, we may leave it to *Philosophers*, either to explain, or to puzzle, our Inquiries. Probable Conjectures and Reasons may be formed; attended, however, with many Uncertainties and Defects: But a perfect Knowledge lyes too deep for human Researches. And we may rest satisfied, that an *Earthquake*, in its *Causes*, is a *Pestilence that walketh in Darknes*, while in its *Effects it destroyeth at Noon-day*.

Much less can the utmost Stretch of Reason determine,— in what *Degree* Preparations for Ruin are stored up in Nature, what Trains are laid for Execution, and in what Order they lye, in the Depth of the Seas, in the Heavens above, or in the Earth beneath;— at what Time, and in what Places, any Eruption or Convulsion shall

shall break forth; how, or where, it shall begin or end. — Much less still can the united Abilities of Mankind find a *Remedy* against an Earthquake, or stop its March, or direct its Motions.

From these Uncertainties and Obscurities we have a plain Lesson to turn our Eyes and Thoughts upwards; and, overlooking Second Causes, to fear and adore the *First Efficient Cause*, the Maker and Mover of the World; who, for wise Purposes, *hath created these Wasters to destroy*. It was the Will of the *Almighty*, who laid the Foundations of the Earth, to compose it of such Materials, as should either consume it in Parcels, or at his appointed Time bring on its total Dissolution. In the mean while, we must allow his *Prerogative* to know, and to prescribe, in what Manner and Measure, in what Countries and Kingdoms, and at what particular Seasons, his Instruments and Preparations shall exert their Strength: Who, for righteous Reasons, will let loose and increase them; or suspend, diminish, or annul, their

their Operation. All resteth in the Breast of Providence. *It is Thou, Lord, and Thou only, that canst make us to dwell in Safety.*

For a *Motive* to such a firm Dependence on whom alone we can depend, *Come, and see what Desolations he hath made in the Earth*: How (as it were but of Yesterday, and before your Eyes) *he hath made a Way to his Indignation*; and what Devastations have ensued, when *he ariseth to shake terribly the Earth.*

Terrible Things hath he shewn in his Righteousness, and made the uttermost Parts of the World afraid at his Tokens; by a more extensive *Earthquake* than probably was ever yet known; as if Sea and Land were in a Combination to destroy the whole Race of Mankind.

Besides Accounts continually arriving, like *Job's* Messengers one after another, of diverse and distant Cities crushed, or swallowed up, with Thousands and ten Thou-

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sands

fands of their Inhabitants buried alive in the Ruins; — what a Spectacle have we both of *Terror* and *Compassion*, in the utter Waste and Desolation of so many Towns and Cities in a neighbouring and well-known *Kingdom*? How, especially, is her *Mother-City* laid wast; she, who like antient *Tyre*, *had the Harvest of the River for her Revenue, and was the Mart of Nations*! How is the City of Renown fallen, — the Rich, the Populous, — the Centre of the Commerce of the World; — and, I fear too, the Centre of its worst *Vices*; — certainly of *Idolatry*, and, its usual Companion, *Persecution*!

And shall such Distresses afford no Warning to our own Country? Shall the Ocean swell, and Mountains shake; shall we look upon the mangled Carcasses of so many Cities, upon Desolation all around us, and we ourselves sit unconcerned, wrapped up in stupid Security? Sure I am the *Sins* of the Nation lye heavy enough upon it to sink it into the Earth; are a *Millstone* about our Necks, sufficient to
drown

drown us in the Depth of the Sea. And unless this heavy Weight, this Load of Iniquity, be removed, there is nothing, in Nature, in Reason, or Divine Justice, to convince us that our own Danger is over; or that the Shaking of the Earth once more may not prove fatal to our own Country. Except we repent we may all likewise perish. The Voice of the Lord in the *Earthquake* speaks loud enough, speaks intelligibly enough, speaks closely enough, — *to open our Ears to Discipline; to make us hear, and fear, and deal no more presumptuously; to call in, and command, every Wanderer to his Duty, and the Service of his Maker.*

But there is *another Voice*, which speaks more *peculiarly* and more directly to this Nation; I mean the Sound of a dangerous and destructive *War*. And a *War* is big with too many Evils, not to call us to a still deeper Sense of Sorrow and *Humiliation*. However *just* may be our *Cause*, or *prosperous the Event*; still it produceth such *Ravages and Plunderings, ruin of Fami-*

lies and Cities, painful and dangerous Wounds, Loss of Life or Limb ; so many Barbarities, and such a prodigal Wast of Human Blood, — as must make all, who have any Feeling of Humanity, lament such a cruel Necessity, and such dreadful Consequences. Nor ought our Apprehensions to subside, while the Safety of the *Community* (in which every Individual is involved) hangs in Suspense, and the Fate of the Nation is at Stake : — While we are dealing with our inveterate Enemy, the common Disturber of *Europe, that bitter and hasty Nation* ; that imperious and perfidious Nation, ever watching for our Ruin ; and which hath long been *beating their Furnace seven Times hotter* with the Fuel of Disappointment and Revenge. *Heaven* preserve us from their Malice ! For, dreadful even as the *Pestilence* was, *David* made it his *Choice*, rather than fly before the Sword of a victorious Enemy : *Because it was falling into the Hands of God, and not into the Hands of Men.*

Thus have we farther Conviction, that
this

this World is not the Place of our Rest. Even while the Earth is opening, for Multitudes, Multitudes, to descend into it; all the mischievous Engines of *War* are preparing for *Self-murder*, for Man to destroy himself. As if the Wrath of Heaven, and the Raging of the Land and Sea, were to be appeased by the Blood of *Human Sacrifices*: — Or rather, as if *Ambition* were taking for its Pattern those *unnatural Wretches* who set fire with their own Hands to the miserable Remains of ruin'd Cities; who plunder, and murder, what the Mercy of *Earthquakes* had spared.

Here lyeth our Hope and Defence, that *War* is not permitted to range without Control, nor is able to exceed the Bounds of its Commission from on high. He, who hath *the Hearts of Kings in his Hand*, can easily dispose them either to hold forth the Olive-branch of *Peace*, or to make mutual Havock of their Subjects and Dominions; may either infatuate and confound their Devices, or crown them
with

with Success. To his Righteous Sentence therefore must we appeal. Nor can we entertain any well-grounded Hopes of Success, unless we engage Heaven on our Side. And how shall we engage that, without fervent Supplication, and a Religious Demeanour? Without the *Divine Benediction* the most vigorous Preparations, and best concerted Measures, are but *lost Labour*.

But whatever be the Event of *War*; — our Lives, our Habitations, our Earth, stand upon too loose and rotten a Foundation to admit of *Presumption*. And while we have Time, we should think of answering the *Prophet's* Question, *What hast thou here? And whom hast thou here?* What one Foundation proper either to settle our Confidence, or engross our Affections, while we see the whole habitable Globe *is turned and tossed like a Ball?* The Ground on which we tread is undermined, and ready to burst under our Feet. 'Tis composed of Materials waiting to flame out at the Will of its Maker; and the

the Train is laid for blowing up ; whenever, and wherever, *the Breath of the Almighty like a Stream of Brimstone shall kindle it.* And yet what are we doing ? This Ball is the Seat, this the Object, of our Pride, our Avarice, or our Ambition. Here we plant, we build, add House to House, City to City ; *and think our Dwelling-places shall continue for ever.* On this dirty Spot we raise Armies, fight Battles ; pull down again, ravage and destroy by Fire and Sword. Of this rotten Earth we take Handfuls, and call them *Inheritances, Settlements, Securities, Perpetuities.* For small Portions of this is Mankind in Hurry and Project ; we labour and turmoil, we lye, we swear, we forswear, we cheat, we steal, we pillage, we murder ; — we even barter away Eternity, the immortal Soul, for a Trifle, for a Toy.

But surely, if Man has any Title to his boasted Faculty of *Reason* ; if any of us pay any regard to Interest, Conscience, or common Sense ; we shall think it high Time to come to a better Mind ; to form
sincere

sincere Resolutions of Amendment, such as will be followed by actual Performances: — no longer dare to violate all the Suggestions of Reason, all the Rules of Morality and Religion; and so notoriously *abuse this World*, the Stage of our Trial; the Care of which is committed to our Trust, whereof we must *soon* give an Account; of whose Decay and Tendency to a Dissolution, *Heaven once, and twice*, and almost every Day, *hath spoken*; and given such *terrifying*, and therefore *merciful*, Warning.

And now, Lord, what is our Hope? Truly our Hope is even in thee. And that such may be our Trust under the present Circumstances, I shall offer a few Considerations both for *Comfort* and *Instruction*.

As First; That Men may not be terrified out of their Senses, as if either the *Enemy* were coming to take away our Place and Nation, or that the *End of the World* and final Judgment were immediately coming upon us; — it will appear to every dili-

diligent Observer of *Scripture*, that *wicked and Idolatrous Nations* are principally marked out as the Objects of judicial Punishment, and even *Destruction by Fire*. I speak not now of Nations, or particular Persons, wicked and profligate in *other* Respects, (every Soul of which God will one Day judge according to their Works) but I speak of Nations, as they are *the Land of graven Images, and are mad upon their Idols*; which are the *Residence and Support of Idolatrous Worship*; where *the Public Profession* of Religion is fundamentally *opposite* to the Doctrine and Kingdom of *Christ*; where the Worship of the *true God*, and the Merits of a *Redeemer*, are turned out of Doors, to make room for *Idols*. Without recurring to the *Old Testament*, where we find *Idolatry* to be the *Capital Crime*, and drawing Divine Vengeance both on *Jews* and *Heathens*; we need only consult the *Revelations of St. John*; which contain a Prophecy of the several Great Events of the *Church*, from the Time of his *Visions* till Time itself shall be no more. During the Process of these

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Events,

Events, we read in one Place (Ch. ix. 20.) *The rest of the Men, who were not killed, yet repented not of the Works of their Hands, that they should not worship Devils, and Idols of Gold and Silver, of Brass and Stone, and of Wood.* In another (Ch. xi. 13.) *There was a great Earthquake, and in the Earthquake were slain of Men Seven Thousand: and the Remnant were affrighted, and gave Glory to God.* And God grant this may be our Case, and of the Nations about us! In a Third, (Ch. xvi. 17.)— which we may presume is yet to come, *The Seventh, and last Angel poured out his Vial into the Air; — and there was a great Earthquake, such as was not since Men were upon the Earth, so mighty an Earthquake and so great.* Immediately is added, *Great Babylon (Rome Papal) came in Remembrance before God.* And in the following Chapters we have a pompous Account, how this *Mother of Harlots and Abominations, she who was drunken with the Blood of the Saints, she by whose Sorceries all Nations had been deceived,* is utterly

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ly burnt with Fire. After which succeeds a new Heaven and a new Earth, &c.

And if these Prophecies may be thought of *doubtful Interpretation*, as to the Time, the Places, or the Persons concerned; still it must be observed, that the *Crime is evidently an idolatrous Worship*, attended with Blood-thirsty *Persecution*. Justly therefore, in the *Form* appointed for this Solemnity, is a *Prayer* inserted for *all Reformed Protestant Churches*, as well as for the particular *Preservation of this Nation*. And, I humbly trust, a good *Providence*, which hath hitherto delivered us, will still deliver and protect this *Bulwark of the Reformation*, the Chief Support of the *Protestant Religion*.

Again, the several Devastations brought upon the Earth are to be considered as so many *Preparations*, that make way for the complete Establishment of the *Glorious Kingdom of our Lord*; both in this World, and a better. The *Sacred Writings* frequently admonish us of great *Commotions*
in

in Nations, and Disturbances in Nature; and those not merely as *Signs*, but as necessary *Introductions*, of those happy Days. Our Lord must reign, bring his Enemies under his Feet, by making all *Opposition* to fall before him. So that *all Things*, all Dispensations, however terrible in Appearance, will work together for Good to them that love God; and be deemed Propitious by those, who wait for the Manifestation of his Kingdom.

When our Saviour (who hath interwoven his Predictions of the Destruction of *Judaea*, with the Signs of the Last Day) foretold upon the Earth Distress of Nations, with Perplexity, the Sea and the Waves roaring; Mens Hearts failing them for Fear, and for looking after those Things which are coming upon the Earth; when he foretold Wars, and Rumours of Wars, and Earthquakes in diverse Places, he added likewise this Encouragement and Consolation to his faithful Followers, Be ye not troubled; look up, and lift up your Heads; for the Time of your Redemption draweth nigh.

nigh. Under such Distresses and Desolations, 'tis indeed scarce possible but the *best* of Men must be liable to some *Misgivings and Forebodings of Heart*. But when a little Time is taken for *due Consideration*, they will see and feel, that these Events are so many Signs and Proofs of the Divine Veracity, Wisdom, Justice, and even Mercy. *God* will be understood, in his most awful and tremendous Works, as calling forth our Reliance and Trust in him; as setting a Fence about our Duty, placing a Guard upon our Salvation, and bringing it nearer in View for a stronger Object of Desire.

To whatever Miseries and Distractions we are subject in this State of Corruption, or to whatever terrible Apprehensions of the Frame of the Earth being ready to be dissolved; *St. Paul* in a noble Passage (*Rom. viii. 19.*—) hath set this great Event in a true and joyful Light. *The earnest Expectation of the Creature* (the vehement Desire of the whole *Creation*) *waiteth for the Manifestation of the Sons of God.*— *It was made*

made subject to Vanity,-- in hope of being delivered from the Bondage of Corruption into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God. For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in Pain together until now. And not only they, but our selves also, who have the First-Fruits of the Spirit, groan within our selves, waiting for the Adoption, the Redemption of our Bodies. You see all Nature is here represented as in the Pangs of Labour, and waiting for a happy Delivery: and the Struggles and Convulsions in the Bowels of the Earth are but so many Provisions, in the Order of God and Nature, for celebrating the Birth-day of a new World.

St. Peter (II. Epist. Ch. 3.) in his magnificent Description of the *last Agonies* of the World by the *general Conflagration*, hath taught us that it was ordained for the same Purpose, the same *final Cause*; the necessary *Introduction*, the Way of Entrance, into our *Lord's Kingdom*. Which however dreadful to the Vicious and Unprepared, affords the most solid Comfort to

to every sincere and pious Christian. The Heavens and the Earth, which now are, are kept in Store, reserved unto Fire against the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of ungodly Men.— But nevertheless, we (all true Believers), according to God's Promise, expect new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.

Such are the Declarations and Assurances, which a Faithful Creator and Gracious Redeemer have provided for every good Christian, for Encouragement and Support under the otherwise most tremendous Events. Nor need we ask, *If the Foundations be cast down, what shall the Righteous do?* How shall he be preserved in the common Ruin of all Things, when the whole habitable Globe shall be melted into a liquid Fire? — The Divine Promise is an infallible Security. And we have full Proof of God's Power, by an Instance of the same Nature, in the Prophet Daniel (Ch. iii.) where Three Eminent Persons, for refusing to comply with an Idolatrous Worship, were cast into a burning fiery Furnace.

nace. But as the *Form of one like the Son of God* came among them; the *Fire* had no *Power over their Bodies*, nor was a *Hair of their Head singed*, nor had the *Smell of Fire* passed on them.

And that this will be verified in Fact at the End of the World, we are assured by the express Word of St. Paul (I. *Theff.* iv. 17.---) *We* (all good Christians) *who are alive, and remain unto the Coming of the Lord, shall be caught up in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

I doubt I may exceed the usual Limits of a Discourse. But, on a solemn Day of *Fasting and Humiliation*, you will bear with me, while I offer a few Words by way of *Instruction*, suitable to the present, and on several Accounts critical, Situation; with respect to the *Public, and Private Persons.*

And first : Experience is sufficient Proof what Care the *Passions* of Men, and the Spirit

Spirit of *Princes*, will take, in fulfilling that Part of our *Lord's Prophecy*, which foretold *Wars, and Rumours of Wars*. And this being a Point, which immediately and sensibly toucheth our selves; and as we see the Fate of the *Nation weighing in the Balance*; it behoveth us to take effectual Care, that we be not *found wanting*; and to consider well, whether our Vices are not numerous, and heavy enough, to *turn the Scale* against us, and bring Desolation upon our Country. And therefore *Interest, Duty, and Public Authority*, jointly constrain us to throw our selves at the Feet of the *Almighty*, and beg a "Blessing upon His Majesty's Fleets and Armies," and *that Iniquity may not be our Ruin*. And because *Prayer for Divine Assistance* always supposeth our own best *Endeavours*; every Person, in his respective Rank and Station, is indispensibly obliged to contribute what lyes in his Power, towards the Advancement of true Religion and Virtue, the Safety, Honour, and Welfare of our Sovereign, and his Kingdoms; and without any Kind or De-

gree of Disloyalty or Disaffection, *to Obey and Honour the Defender of the Faith*; the *Principal* Defender upon the Face of the Earth of the *Protestant*, that is, the *Christian*. Faith; though it may not be as yet arrived to a State of *Purity and Perfection*. A *different* Behaviour is but promoting the Interest of the *Great Apostasy*. Nor can I ever think otherwise of any *Attempts, or Designs, to subvert and alter the Government*, but as so many Steps towards *Idolatry*, so many Blows at *the Reformation*, and Advances towards the *Worship of wooden Gods, and wicked Saints*.

Secondly; with regard to the Accomplishment of *other* Parts of your Lord's *Predictions, Earthquakes in diverse Places, the Sea and the Waves roaring, &c.* — These, you are to consider, lye wholly at the *Will and Disposition of Providence*. There is no saying *Peace and Safety* to our selves, or putting any Stop to the *Forerunners of the Lord's Coming*; because no Mortal can say to an *Earthquake, hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther*; or to the
Sea,

Sea, here shall thy proud Waves be stayed. He alone, who hath given them their *Commission*, hath any Right or Power to fix their *Bounds*. And though he hath often brought such *Desolations upon Earth*; yet within our own Memory, and in our own Days, they come thicker and faster, with greater Violence, and in a more extensive Manner; — as so many Tokens portending a *nearer Devastation* of the whole Earth, and Day of Judgment to ensue. Accordingly these Dispensations require our intire Submission to the *Will of Heaven*; — an unshaken *Belief of the Gospel*; — a thankful Heart for having received these *Warnings*; — and a constant Endeavour to *strengthen the Things that remain*. We are however to bear in Mind, that it lyeth out of the Reach of *Human Foresight* and Sagacity to discover at *what Distance* the End of all Things may be; the *precise Time of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man*. Nor ought any one, from any *calamitous Appearances*, presume to prophesy, or hastily to conclude, that the *Great Day of Doom* is *instantly and immediately co-*

ming. [We have *Prophecies and Promises* in *Scripture* of a *purser State of Religion* than the World hath yet known; by the Destruction of the Seat of *Anti-Christ*, the Restoration of the *Jews*, and full Calling of the *Gentiles*; which forbid all rash and hasty Determinations, *before all these Things shall be fulfilled.* By what Means indeed such a *happy Alteration* shall be effected; and whether *suddenly* or more *gradually*, or even upon *this Earth* in its present Condition; — this is one of the *Secrets belonging to the Lord*; who hath many Ways, unfearchable to us, of bringing his Purposes to pass.] The *Affairs* therefore of the World *must* go on: Men must attend the Business of their respective *Stations and Employments.* Duty to our *Families*, and the Nature of *Society*, require this at our Hands. And it is easy to conceive what Variety of *Distresses* and *Confusions* must follow, should any wild Notion of *Christ's coming immediately to Judgment* so far prevail, as to put a Stop to our common Business and Occupations. *Without these cannot a City be inhabited;*
and

and all the necessary Provisions for Life and Raiment must fail. Wherefore the same *Apostle*, who hath told us *the Time is short*, hath likewise enjoined *every one to abide in his Calling*. But withal a strict Regard to *Honesty*, a steady Principle of *Integrity*, must indispensably be observed in all our Dealings; — *and so much the more, as we see the Day approaching.*

Lastly; Seeing there is no Part of this *material World* that can stand the Shock of so many Enemies ordained for its *Destruction*; and we can form no probable Conjecture *how soon* we may fall a *Sacrifice* to any of them; — 'tis of the utmost Necessity, unless we have lost our Understanding, that we provide a Refuge in the *Sanctuary of Heaven*, by a firm and inseparable Adherence to true *Religion and Virtue*; which amidst the Ruins and Confusions of Nature stand fixed and immovable upon their own Bottom, and have the *Rock of Ages* engaged for their Protection.

After *God's late Visitation*, and sending
abroad

abroad his Judgments upon Earth, little will it avail us merely to make it a shuddering *Topic of Conversation*,— how *Trade* will be affected,-- what *causeth* an Earthquake, &c. Light and empty will be our *Humiliation*, in going gravely and soberly through the *Ceremony of a Day*, or feeling some *short Fit* of Piety and Devotion. It must reach to the *Heart and Soul*, and make a strong and *lasting Impression there*; such as will effectually secure the One Thing *Valuable, the One Thing Necessary*.

For however the frail Tenement of our *Bodies*, however the *Earth*, with all its Lumber and Moveables, may be of short Duration, and little Value; yet in their *Use and Consequences* they become of *Infinite Importance*; as they reach through all the Depths of *Eternity*, and our Behaviour here shall determine our Condition *for ever*.

'Tis Matter of flight Moment, whether we dye a *Natural*, or a *Violent* Death; whether we expire in our *Beds*, or fall by
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the *Sword*, or are swallowed by an *Earthquake*, or are reserved for the *Great Conflagration*. The only *real* Point of Importance is, whether we are *preparing* our selves for a *Perpetuity of Happiness*, or a *Perpetuity of Misery*. Nor is the Case *alter'd*, whether we come to our End *To-day*, or *To-morrow*; whether final Judgment overtake us *this Year*, or a *Thousand Years* hence. Sooner, or later, all must come to pass. But for ought we know, the *Judge* of all the Earth may even now be *bringing Justice to our Doors*. The *World* itself must die, as well as its Inhabitants. It discovereth daily more, and more apparent, Marks of *Old-Age*, with self-evident Proofs of a *shattered Constitution*. And, what particularly lays Claim to the *Attention of Believers*, our *Lord's Predictions*, and the *Signs* of his Coming, seem to be gathering about us, and *hastening into Accomplishment*. And yet there is *something within our selves* more *perilous*, more to be *feared*, than any the most *amazing Prodigies* throughout the World; and that is, -- the heavy Sum of *National Wickedness*, which
seems

seems almost to *demand Payment at the Hands of God*. With what a Torrent of *Profane Oaths and Curses, and Blasphemies, Drunkenness and Debaucheries, Injustice and Dishonesty, Scoffing and Infidelity, Immoralities and Impieties of all Kinds and Degrees*, are our Streets and Habitations over-run? How *fearful a Thing* is it, in such Circumstances, *to fall into the Hands of the Living God?* And how melancholy our Prospect, unless the *Prayers and Lives* of Good Persons prevail for a *Blessing*, and be accepted as a *Counter-balance* to the Weight of our Iniquities?

On all Accounts, then, *He that is Righteous, let him be Righteous still; and he that is Holy, let him be Holy still*. His constant and unshaken Perseverance in Duty, besides proving him the best Friend to his *Country*, will be his *Anchor* and Stay, amidst all the Commotions and Distractions that surround him. The most violent Shocks in Nature will serve to *strengthen and confirm his Faith*; as well as bring forward his *Reward*. But we admonish,

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we hope, and pray, that *he that is Unjust*, will not be *Unjust still*; nor *he that is Filthy* be *Filthy still*; lest he should be given up to a *Judicial Hardness*. For a Man must have the *Heart of Pharaoh*, when he refuseth to be softened and reformed, nor will let his Sins go, when *God's repeated Judgments* are upon him. But as nothing within the *Compass of the Universe* can possibly be of *equal Concernment* to any Mortal, as the everlasting State of his *Soul*; so nothing possibly can equal the *Folly* of abandoning it to *final Destruction*. And the *Profligate* must remember, that *Heaven* is wanting in nothing for his *Security*. The *perpetual Warnings of a kind Father*, the *sanctifying Grace of the Spirit*, the *Atonement of a Saviour*, all jointly call upon him for *Repentance and Amendment*; to make his *Peace with Heaven*, before he be *snatched hence*, and be *no more seen*: — *No more seen*, till he appear at the *Bar of Judgment*.

Could we but bring ourselves to such a
Situation, we should not be afraid of any
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evil

evil Tidings. Then the Voice of the Lord in the Earthquake would be a glorious Voice. The Sword itself would prove a Mercy. Then Wars may rage, Nations may lie in Ruins, and Empires be torn from their Foundations; the Pillars of the Earth may tremble, and our World be batter'd about our Ears: But God's Promise of a Kingdom that cannot be shaken will remain faithful and true. For thus saith the Prophet (Isa. li. 6.) Lift up your Eyes to the Heavens, and look upon the Earth beneath. For the Heavens shall vanish away like Smoke, and the Earth shall wax old as a Garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like Manner: But my Salvation shall be for ever, and my Righteousness shall not be abolished.

This is the Way to Security, and there is no other. And here is the Mind that hath Wisdom.

St. Peter, in Words full of comfortable Doctrine, and sound Advice, shall draw my Conclusion. (Acts iii. 19.—) Re-
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pent ye therefore, and be converted; that your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of Refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you: whom the Heavens must receive until the Times of the Restitution of all Things; which God hath spoken by the Mouth of all his Holy Prophets since the World began.

For which happy Times God fit and preserve us all!

T H E E N D.

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Let it be known that
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